

Message Text

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TAGS: ECON, EGEN, EIND
SUBJ: SADAT LAUNCHES "GREEN REVOLUTION"

1. PRESIDENT SADAT'S THREE-DAY TOUR OF NEW VALLEY GOVERNORATE TO INSPECT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS GIVEN FRONT PAGE TREATMENT APRIL 2 AND 3 BY LOCAL PRESS. FOCUS OF REPORTING WAS ON SADAT'S ANNOUNCEMENT OF "GREEN REVOLUTION" WHICH HE "LAUNCHED" AT CEREMONY FOR DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE DEEDS FOR 14,000 FEDDANS TO FARMERS IN NEW VALLEY. ACCORDING REPORTS, SADAT ALSO "AGREED" THAT GOVERNMENT WILL SHOULDER OUTRIGHT 50 PER CENT OF FARMERS' COSTS IN NEW VALLEY WITH REMAINING 50 PER CENT ADVANCED TO THEM IN FORM OF LOAN TO BE PAID IN INSTALLMENTS OVER 40-YEAR PERIOD.

2. ACCORDING TO PRESS, PRESIDENT EQUATED "GREEN REVOLUTION" TO 23 JULY AND 15 MAY POLITICAL REVOLUTIONS AND SAID ENSURING FOOD SUFFICIENCY FOR EVERY CITIZEN OF NILE VALLEY IS EGYPT'S CURRENT PRIORITY. SADAT REITERATED BELIEF THAT EGYPT POSSESSES NECESSARY LAND, WATER AND CLIMATE TO SUCCEED IN THIS REVOLUTION AND HE EXHORTED PEOPLE TO EXERT THEIR UTMOST EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE "PEACE
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AND PROSPERITY."

3. CABINET IMMEDIATELY TOOK UP PRESIDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENT, ACCORDING TO PRESS ACCOUNTS, AT ITS APRIL 5 MEETING. ACCORDING TO PRESS, CABINET SET "WORK PROGRAM" FOR IMPLEMENTATION SADAT'S DIRECTIVES TO EXPAND AGRICULTURAL AREA IN NEW VALLEY AND INCREASE ITS POPULATION.

AMONG STEPS REPORTEDLY APPROVED BY CABINET ARE THE "IMMEDIATE" PLANTING OF 750,000 FEDDANS IN NEW VALLEY AND ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMITTEE TO SET ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INCENTIVES FOR INCREASED POPULATION OF AREA. THE CABINET ALSO REPORTEDLY APPROVED CREATION OF A "NEW COMPANY" TO BEGIN AGRICULTURAL VENTURES, PRODUCE FODDER AND SOLVE TRANSPORT PROBLEMS. EXISTING PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTOR COMPANIES WILL SUBSCRIBE UP TO 25 PERCENT OF THE NEW COMPANY'S SHARES, ACCORDING TO PRESS.

4. COMMENT: SADAT'S TOUR OF NEW VALLEY WAS HIGHLIGHT THUS FAR OF HIS "IN DEPTH" VISITS TO GOVERNORATES TO STUDY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WHICH BEGAN LATE FEBRUARY AFTER HIS RETURN FROM VISIT TO U.S. HIS ANNOUNCEMENT OF GREEN REVOLUTION IS OUTGROWTH OF EMPHASIS HE HAS PLACED ON NEED TO INVADE DESERT AND PROVIDE INCREASED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION FOR GROWING POPULATION. THIS PARTICULARLY TIMELY SUBJECT IN VIEW OF POLITICAL CRITICISM OF GOE FOR RISING PRICES AND SLOW PACE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. GREEN REVOLUTION IS STILL VERY MUCH OF AN IDEA WITHOUT CLEAR PLANS FOR IMPLEMENTATION. CABINET DECISIONS REPORTED ABOVE, HOWEVER, INDICATE THERE IS MORE THAN THE USUAL STEAM BEHIND THESE PROPOSALS AND IT MAY BE BUREAUCRACY WILL BE GALVANIZED INTO ACTION ON THIS ONE.

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5. IT SHOULD BE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT EVEN IF BUREAUCRACY DOES MIRACULOUSLY FOLLOW THROUGH ON PLAN TO TURN THE DESERT GREEN, THE COSTS OF LAND RECLAMATION ARE EXTREMELY HIGH, THE LENGTH OF TIME REQUIRED TO DO SO IS CLOSE TO A DECADE, AND EGYPT'S POPULATION GROWTH RATE IS SUCH THAT A SUCCESSFUL "GREEN REVOLUTION" WILL NOT EVEN KEEP PACE WITH THE NEW MOUTHS TO FEED. THUS WE DO NOT BELIEVE THIS NEW PLAN IS THE PANACEA FOR EGYPT'S FOOD REQUIREMENTS. EILTS

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